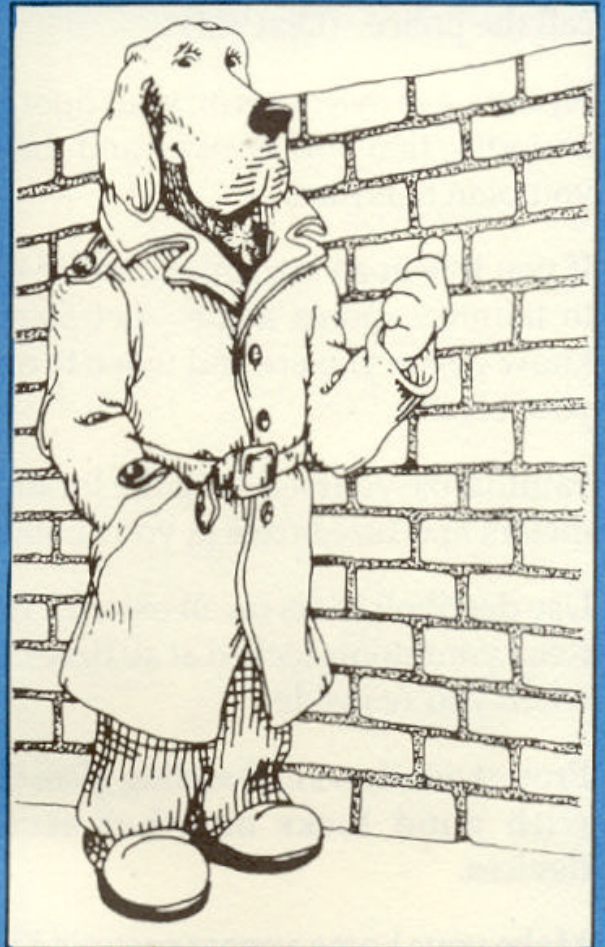


# Howard County

M A R Y L A N D

## Be on the Safe Side

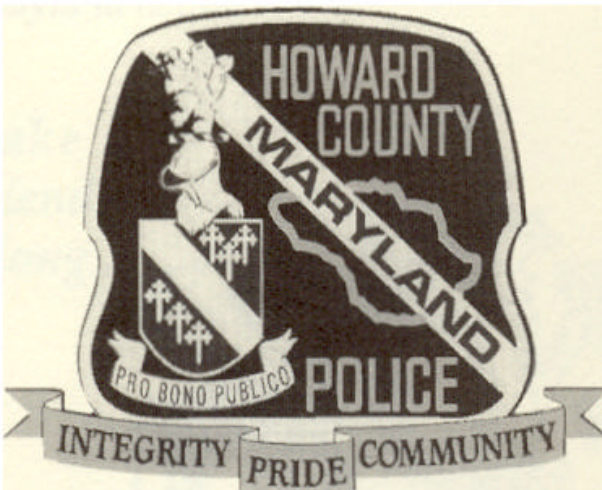
*Build a wall  
between you and crime*



## Crime Prevention Tips

*from the  
Howard County Police Department*

*courtesy of*



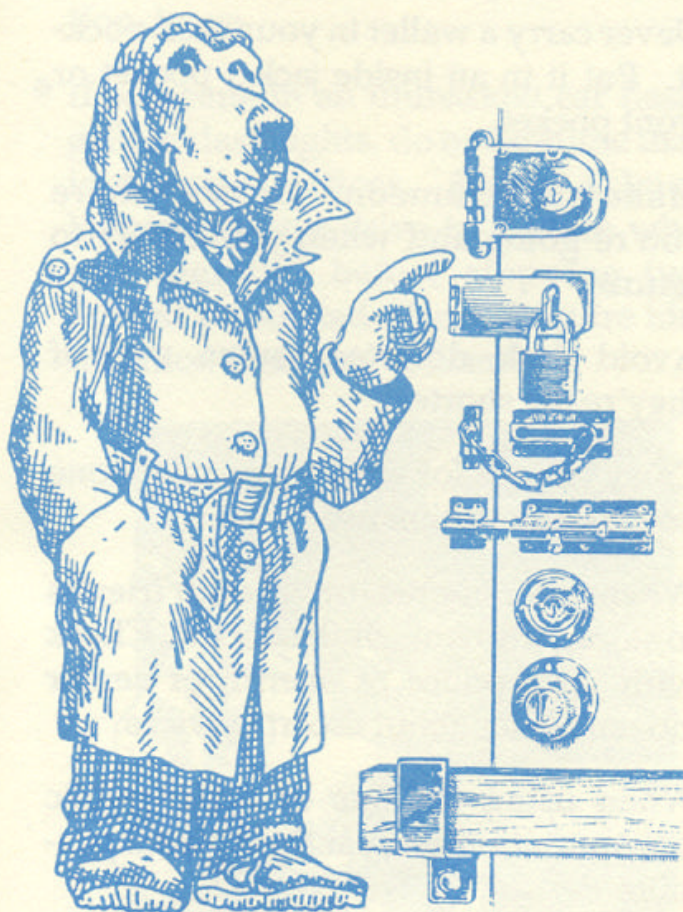
3410 Courthouse Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043  
(410) 313-3020  
Text Telephone 313-2323



## When you're home

- Your obvious hiding places for keys are just as obvious to your attacker. Extra keys should be left with a trusted neighbor.
- Be prepared to enter your house without complications. Have the house or apartment key in your hand.
- If a window or door has been forced or broken while you were absent, do not enter. Go to your neighbor's home and call the police. (Dial 911)
- Never leave messages on your door; they advertise that you're away and the time you plan to return.
- If you live in an apartment, avoid going to laundry rooms alone. Let someone know where you are and when to expect your return.
- Familiarize yourself with the location of meters and fuse boxes in your home.
- Use deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Keep your doors locked at all times, even when you're inside.
- Protect windows and sliding glass doors with good locks or other security devices.
- Make your home appear occupied when you go out by using a timer to turn on lights and a radio.

- Never let strangers in your home without checking their identification. Call their company if you're not sure. Install a peephole in your door and use it.
- If you live alone, don't advertise it. Use only your first initial in phone books, directories, apartment lobbies.
- Get to know your neighbors and keep their phone number handy for emergencies.
- Engrave your valuables with a unique identification number recommended by the police. Local youth groups may provide this service free to seniors. Keep bonds, stock certificates, seldom worn jewelry, and stamp and coin collections in a safe deposit box.





## When you're out

- Check the interior of the car before entering.
- Lock car doors while driving.
- Do not stop for a stranded motorist. Instead, go to the nearest phone booth and call the police for assistance.
- If you suspect that someone is following you, drive to the nearest public place or police station for help.
- Never leave house keys attached to car keys at service stations or parking lots.
- If you must carry a purse, hold it close to your body, don't dangle it. Or use a fanny pouch instead.
- Never carry a wallet in your back pocket. Put it in an inside jacket pocket or front pocket.
- Make sure someone knows where you're going and when you expect to return.
- Avoid dark, deserted routes, even if they're the shortest.
- Carry change for emergency telephone and transportation use.
- Whenever possible, travel with friends to stores, the bank, or the doctor. Check with your police or sheriff, or senior citizen center about escort services.
- When using the bus or other public transportation, sit near the driver if possible.
- Don't overburden yourself with packages and groceries that obstruct your view and make it hard to react.
- Have your car or house key in hand as you approach your vehicle or home.
- When you drive, keep doors locked and windows up. Park in well-lighted, busy areas. If you have car trouble, be wary of strangers who offer help. Stay in your car and ask them to call a service truck or the police.
- If a friend or a taxi takes you home, ask the driver to wait until you are safely inside.
- Communicate the message that you are calm, confident, and know where you are going. Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave.
- If someone in an unmarked car flashes grill or dash lights, do not assume that it is a police officer. Signal acknowledgement and drive to a place where you feel safe before stopping (well lighted populated place). Require identification from the "officer."





## Walking

- Always be alert and aware. Walk with assurance and a sense of purpose.
- Maintain a good arms-length of distance between yourself and anyone seeking contact with you.
- Consider carrying only a small change purse with necessities, instead of a hand-bag. If accosted, give the assailant your purse.
- Walk on the side of the street facing traffic.
- Walk near the curb to avoid passing close to shrubbery, doorways and other places of concealment. Confine yourself to well-lighted areas to avoid shortcuts such as alleys.
- Keep your hands as free as possible and wear clothing that will allow you freedom to run.
- If a driver stops to ask directions, avoid getting close to the car.
- If a car approaches and you are harassed by the occupants, run in the opposite direction of the vehicle, so that the driver will have to turn around. Try to observe the tag number. Tag numbers help the police.
- Tell a friend or family member where you're going and the time you expect to return home.

## Use your head to protect your body



- **Chemical Sprays:** have become available as a means of self-defense. Unfortunately, they can provide a false sense of security.
- **Other weapons:** Remember! Any weapons can be taken away from you and used against you.
- **Personal alarms:** Whistles, air powered "personal alarms" or similar devices, "Shriek Alert," offer a method to summon assistance; however, exercise caution when using such devices.



## What if you're assaulted?

- If the attacker is only after your purse or other valuables, don't resist. Your life and safety are worth more than your possessions.
- Make a conscious effort to get an accurate description of the attacker and call the police immediately.
- Contact your local victim assistance agency to help you deal with the trauma that all crime victims experience. They can help you learn more about counseling, victim compensation laws and how to follow your case's progress.



***Your life and safety  
are worth more than  
your possessions.***

## If you are a victim

- It is impossible to protect yourself from all sexual assaults or street robberies. You may follow all the advice and preventive measures known and still find yourself confronted by an assailant.
- Since people and situations vary, there is no "best method" of self-protection. No method is foolproof and there are no guarantees. The defense method you prefer and utilize, if any, must be your own decision.
- Stay as calm as possible. Try not to panic or show any signs of anger or confusion.
- Consider your well-being as the highest priority. Don't escalate the incident into a violent confrontation in which someone may be injured or killed.
- Make a conscious effort to get an accurate description of the robber(s): age, race, complexion, body build, height, weight, type and color of clothing.
- After the robber leaves, call police immediately.



## Protect your money

- If you receive checks in the mail regularly, arrange for them to be sent directly to the bank instead.
- Avoid carrying large sums of money. If you must take a large sum, have a friend accompany you.
- Don't display large amounts of cash in stores or other public places.
- Don't sign a check or contract until you're sure it's for a legitimate reason and know the details. Check with a friend, lawyers, or police officer if in doubt.
- Never put your purse or wallet on a counter while you examine merchandise in a store.
- If possible, use ATM machines that are located inside commercial establishments and use them during daylight hours.

Take a  
friend  
along...



# Howard County

M A R Y L A N D

*When citizens and police work together, they can build a wall against crime. To help you "be on the safe side," we have compiled a list of crime prevention tips to give you information about how to protect yourself and your families from crime and what resources are available to those who may become victims of crime.*

*The Howard County Department of Police encourages you to take these precautions in your home and in your community. Your personal safety is the major priority of our dedicated police force.*